



# 'Din ki shuruaat'

Surendra Kuntal

Din ki shuruaat is the name given to the informal assembly organised every morning for the duration of 40 minutes. In the morning we all group ourselves in a circle in the courtyard of the school. Then we start counting, one by one. This is used for the activities of the day by the teacher who is responsible.

## Why was it named din ki shuruaat?

In July we found children at many different levels with respect to their learning standards. The students were new and most of them had never gone to school as they were dropouts or have never been enrolled. We also were not at ease with them as we had not taught these many small children.

As children come to school with lots of energy we decided to use it in a positive manner. As all teachers attended the “shuruaat” we thought that it would be easier for us to engage with them. We decided to do something different and explored the themes. As it was to be organised at the beginning of the school day, it was named [din ki shuruaat](#).

## Our objectives

- To engage the children for a period of 30 minutes
- To build a bond
- Develop self-confidence
- To motivate and provide a platform for self-expression
- To experiment whether they learn together with fun and games
- Learn to deal with multi-grade and multi-level children together

## Its format

It was decided that every teacher would introduce a poem or activity relevant to her subject to enhance learning for forty minutes at the start of school. Its duration was also fixed for a period of forty minutes at the beginning of the day. This was done according to a fixed timetable.

## Processes that were undertaken and that were related to the subjects

**Language** -We started with action songs and rhymes which were firstly sung and introduced by the teachers. Afterwards children learnt them and

- Cauliflower- while the midday meal was served a child called Praveen said, “Wow! Aaj to cauliflower ki sabji hai”)
- (Solving a riddle in Hindi A poem based on riddle was recited in the assembly. To solve it students used basic operation of addition and subtraction. All the students were busy doing so on the floor of the courtyard to solve it)
- (Rules not a matter of concern – when a student was asked if she had understood the rules of game she said, “Pata hai hop a little karke jaana hai!”)

led the singing by turns. New words were introduced either from the songs and the rhymes or their immediate surroundings that the children could feel connected with and can use them in their daily life. Children took much interest in singing and reciting the rhymes and songs together by turns and felt very happy as they were leading the others. Games were also played to introduce the names of body parts, colours, fruits, vegetables, animals, days, months, the alphabets of English and Hindi. Displays of the songs and rhymes were pasted on the walls through charts. The words that were introduced were also written and pasted on the walls for the children to read and copy.

**Maths-** Counting was initially done by the children when they assembled themselves in a circle. Afterwards the activities were related with the different concepts and were conducted in a form of games. The games were grouping the children as even and odd numbers and playing a game such as hopscotch, and hitting the glass with the ball. Children wrote the numbers that were given to them for identification, registered them and followed this by the basic operations of addition and subtraction. Skip counting introduced multiplication.

(To have fun with Maths, the children played kabaddi. For this they were grouped and the game was played. At the end of the game they



counted themselves as how many remained safe in the team. Then the symbols of greater than ( $>$ ), less than ( $<$ ) and equal to ( $=$ ) were introduced) it should be in a box



**Use of walls-** Children wrote the date in the DD/MM/YYYY format after the introduction of the months through a song. A calendar of the months was wrote on the wall from which the children can identify the date and day. Children wrote the words that were introduced and poems and songs, names of the days and the four directions were displayed on the walls. The names of the students and the alphabets in English as well in Hindi were also written by the students through games.

**Directions** – the theme of knowing the directions was also introduced. Most of the children knew the direction from which sun rises. Based on that, we did activities to learn the names of directions, by grouping the children according to the direction from which they came to school



and the directions in which their homes are situated from school.

**Calendar-** The theme of it included the introduction of names of the days and months. Names of the months were introduced through a song and by showing by the name written on cards. Then the children arranged the cards in proper order. By then the children had learnt to count up to 30, and could arrange the numbers

from one to 30 from the cards, and started writing in the DD/MM/YYYY format on the blackboard. All the children found this very interesting.

**Balance-** The school has a balance fixed in a corner of the courtyard. When it was first tied it broke as there were many children doing different experiments to weigh and get to know how the needle of the balance moved. The balance is now fixed permanently as the children weighed everything from a brick to mud and sticks to plants. It is now being used for maths and EVS.

**Marking of sun's rays-** As the sun's rays fall in a definite angle on our courtyard, we decided to mark it. We started doing this once in two days and saw the marked deflection in the angle. The children were very excited doing this and finally we used the globe to explain the movement of the earth round the sun to explain the seasons. Most of the older students got to know why it is so hot in summer and why it is cold in winter and the impact of rays falling on earth.

**Clock activity-** We took a clock and opened it, removed the glass from it and also removed the second hand. We placed the minute hand on 12 and started the activity of telling the time. The students who recognised the numbers well started to tell the time correctly. Then we introduced the minute hand. Some found this idea difficult as it goes with the multiplication tables. We provided opportunities for the children to ask, tell and, most importantly, to touch the needle and move around the numbers. Children showed much interest in touching it and moved the hour hand round and round even if they didn't know the time.

**Measuring tape-** A measuring tape was also pasted in one corner to measure the height of the children. Afterwards it was used by the children to see the numbers and measure each other's heights. Even those who could not identify the numbers found observing the tape interesting.

## Achievements

- The children became confident and expressed themselves strongly.
- The children learnt the words and actions of both Hindi and English rhymes quite easily. By the end of the year, they could recite 18 Hindi poems and 12 English ones.
- Children learnt most of the maths concepts and English words. Also the children started using Hindi while talking which was earlier their mother tongue.
- Children started writing the dates by themselves.
- Children learnt to tell the time in hours, some even in hours and minutes.
- The children also got knowledge of the directions.
- The children also helped each other in reciting and writing and understanding of the concepts.
- We developed good relations with the children which was very useful.
- They all learnt together and we also felt comfortable with the children.

## Challenges

Now we have more than 75 students enrolled. Space has become short for our activities and games. We must now think of new ways to introduce activities and learning within the space we have. The children and their energy are our motivators, although to do any activity we feel shortage of space especially organising any game.

**Surendra** is an English teacher in the Azim Premji School at Mandwa in Sirohi district of Rajasthan since February 2012. He has earlier taught the senior classes in reputed schools for four years. His interests are reading, playing badminton and relaxing with friends. He believes that he can achieve what he has set out to through constant effort. He can be contacted at [surendra.kuntal@azimpremijifoundation.org](mailto:surendra.kuntal@azimpremijifoundation.org)

